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LETTERS PATENT

STANDARD PATENT

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I, Fatima Beattie, the Commissioner of Patents, grant a Standard Patent with the following particulars:

Name and Address of Patentee(s):

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Title of Invention:

Method and Apparatus for Controlling the Cost of Playing an Electronic Gaming Device

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- (56) Related Art
US 6110041
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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Electronic gaming machines, such as slot machines or video poker machines are interconnected by a computer network. The behavior of each machine is controlled by configuring selected parameters such as game speed, payback percentage, or game appearance. As the machines are played, any of the selected parameters may be changed responsive to commands issued over the network. The commands are issued in response to predetermined changes in variables such as rate of play, player status, and the time of the day, week, or month. The payback percentage may be changed by implementing a new pay table at the selected machine or machines or by implementing a bonus period during which a percentage of all money played on the selected machines accrues in a bonus pool. During the bonus period, the selected machines are eligible for bonus awards that may be random or related to jackpots paid based on the pay tables in the selected machines.

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The claims defining the invention are as follows:

1. A method of operating electronic gaming machines interconnected by a computer network to a host computer comprising:
 - permitting play to occur at the machines;
 - operating a player-tracking system on the network;
 - monitoring the level of play of a tracked player on multiple gaming machines;
 - transmitting data relating to the monitored level over the network;
 - storing the data on a computer connected to the network;
 - selecting a machine being played by the player;
 - determining a bonus based at least in part on the stored data; and
 - paying the bonus to the player via the selected machine.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein said method further comprises issuing a computer command from the host computer.
3. The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein paying the bonus to the player via the selected machine comprises paying the bonus to the player via the selected machine responsive to the computer command.
4. The method of any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein said method further comprises implementing a pay table in each machine and wherein said bonus is independent of any payment to the player resulting from the pay table.
5. A method of operating electronic gaming machines interconnected by a computer network to a host computer substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.
6. A method of operating electronic gaming machines interconnected by a computer network to a host computer according to any one of claims 1 to 4 and substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

Dated this Eighteenth day of July 2006.

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